

Charlotte County update for 2/5/20

Baseball is back this month in Charlotte County

By Ray Sandrock, Charlotte County administrator

Baseball will soon be back in Charlotte County, with the Tampa Bay Rays returning for their 12th spring training camp at Charlotte Sports Park and the Snowbird Baseball Classic drawing 44 college teams from around the country.

Both have a significant effect on Charlotte County's economy. Visitors attending the 16 spring training games in 2019 generated nearly \$14 million in economic impact in Charlotte County. That figure does not include spending by the Rays players and staff or money spent by county residents attending games. More than 67% of fans were from out of town and visitors generated about 9,900 room nights in county hotels.

The first workout for Rays pitchers and catchers is scheduled for Feb. 13 and the first Grapefruit League game at Charlotte Sports Park is against the Yankees Feb. 23. Visit <https://www.mlb.com/rays/spring-training> for the full schedule and tickets.

If you attend a game, you may see some of my colleagues who serve as ambassadors, welcoming fans to the stadium. Many thanks to those ambassadors for making a special effort to demonstrate our culture of service to residents and visitors.

In 2019, the Snowbird Baseball Classic generated \$13.3 million total economic impact. Spectators, players, coaches and staff occupied more than 23,300 room nights in area accommodations.

The 2020 classic runs from Feb. 14 to March 22. Games in Charlotte County will be played at Centennial Park, 1185 O'Donnell Blvd., in Port Charlotte and South County Regional Park, 670 Cooper Street in Punta Gorda. Visit www.SnowbirdBaseball.info for teams and schedules.

Senior Games

For those who like to play sports as much as watch, registration is open for the 2020 Fit For Life Senior Games.

Events include cycling, swimming, golf, bocce, basketball, bag toss, track and field, RC sailing, archery, tennis, pickleball and bowling. Events are scheduled between March 1 and March 21.

The games are sanctioned by the Florida Sports Foundation and serve as qualifiers for the Florida Senior Games State Championships. The games are open to amateur athletes, 50-plus years of age as of Dec. 31, 2019. Competitors are divided into five-year age groups. You do not have to be a Florida resident to compete.

To learn more and register, visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click Parks/Recreation/ Pools. Registration packets are also available at all parks and recreation facilities.

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